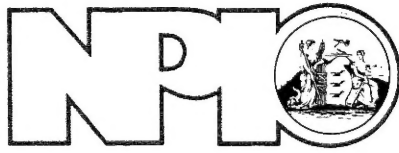


NEWARK
PUBLIC
INFORMATION
OFFICE



City Hall, 920 Broad Street, Room 214
Newark, New Jersey 07102
(201) 733-8004
Pamela E. Goldstein, Director

Press Release:

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For Further Information, Contact: David H. Lippman (973)-733-3697

MAYOR BACKS PORT AUTHORITY AND OPPOSES CITY COUNCIL LAWSUIT

Mayor Sharpe James today announced his opposition to a lawsuit filed by the Newark City Council against the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey.

"As the duly elected chief executive of the City of Newark, it is my duty to oppose the unwarranted, frivolous, and irresponsible suit filed by the City Council against the Port Authority," James said.

The Council's action claims that the PA has unfairly benefited from tax exemptions and abatements, and is not paying its fair share to the City.

"Not so," said Mayor James. "If any agency has been cooperative and supportive of Newark, assisting it as much as possible, it has been the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey."

According to the mayor, the PA annually pays the City \$18 million as well as a percentage of its annual profits. Last year that sum paid to Newark was \$17 million, which meant the City received \$37 million from the bi-state authority.

In addition, the PA is a major employer in the City of Newark, providing jobs on the City's piers, rail facilities, and airport, which in turn generate more income to City coffers.

Mayor James assailed the suit as an "unnecessary expenditure of Newark's taxpayers' dollars for politically-designed legal fees," James said. "I am appalled that duly elected representatives of the people can ignore our citizens' needs and interests in favor of this political grandstanding."

He warned that extended legal action of this nature would force the City into ruinous expenses. In addition, this court action could force the PA to suspend its annual payments, which would force an additional and unwarranted tax burden on Newark's citizens and businesses, damaging the City's economy.

"It is ridiculous and asinine to beat over the head an agency that has fully cooperated with the City of Newark in building and operating one of the finest airports in America and assisting Newark at the same time."

James pointed out that the Port Authority has supported the City in many initiatives, ranging from the construction of the New Jersey Performing Arts Center to the annual Festival of People. "Damaging this relationship will have major implications for our City's economic future and reputation," James said.

"The members of the Council seek to reward themselves with a phony lawsuit, in order to pay politically orchestrated legal fees," James said. "What a joke! This money could be better spent on senior citizens' housing, recreation, health care, or the creation of jobs for the unemployed. All of these, by the way, are municipal initiatives that the PA has helped support."

James said his administration would join with the Port Authority in opposing this lawsuit, which has been filed in the Chancery Division of Superior Court of New Jersey in Essex County. "I am studying this suit with the City counsel and PA officials," James said. "We will take appropriate action."